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ABSTRACT

A sociolinguistic study of Ocracoke, an island community in North Carolina's Outer Banks, investigated the social dynamics of language change and variation. Data were gathered in interviews with 43 island residents aged 12-82, most of whose families have been on the island for several generations. Several major sociolinguistic issues were examined: where the Ocracoke dialect fits in with surrounding dialects; the social interactional, demographic, and psychological factors correlating with language variation; and the direction and reasons for any current language change. The study's findings in these areas are described, with examples of phonological, morphosyntactic, and grammatical variations from this and comparison dialects provided. In addition, the researchers' plans to return the community's favor of cooperation are detailed. These consist of followup activities to the study, including: writing of a popular account of the island's language history in a form useful to the community, especially the school system; compilation of an archival tape of representative speech samples from interviews, for historic preservation; and a language awareness program for the schools. A humorous Ocracoke "quiz" and a brief bibliography are included. (MSE)

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ED 360 818

THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPLEXITY OF QUASI-ISOLATED SOUTHERN COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Paper delivered at:

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INTRODUCTION

As Labov's (1963) protocol study of Martha's Vineyard three decades ago demonstrated, the changing status of island communities due to external and internal factors makes them ideal for examining the socially-situated dynamics of language change and variation. Whereas each island community certainly has a unique history, there is little doubt that important generalized sociolinguistic principles may be derived from such situations.

Given the sociolinguistic significance of isolated communities, it is somewhat surprising that the traditional Linguistic Atlas surveys conducted in the Atlantic States tended to ignore the Outer Banks, a set of barrier islands approximately 20 miles from the North Carolina coast. Furthermore, the restricted descriptive accounts of these communities (e.g. Howren 1962; Shores 1991) tend to minimize the sociolinguistic situations that contextualize these varieties in deference to the description of traditional dialect traits that set these islands apart from contiguous mainland varieties.

In an effort to give these island communities the sociolinguistic attention they deserve, we present some preliminary findings from our current study of Ocracoke, an island community on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Ocracoke is a protocol Eastern Seaboard island community. It is not accessible through driving, but is reached primarily through state-operated ferries. As with a number of the island's counterparts along the Eastern seaboard, a vibrant but now-controlled tourist industry has developed, largely since World War II, but existent to some extent for a century. Obviously, this situation has changed the economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural dynamics of the island community.

As part of the North Carolina Language and Life Project, we recently conducted interviews with 43 different island residents of different age ranges (from 12 through 82 years of age) who represent several diverse social networks within the community. Most of the post-adolescent interviews were conducted with ***ancestral islanders***, that is, residents who can trace their genealogy as islanders at least several generations back. We also included in our sociolinguistic interviews some ***new islanders***, that is, first generation lifetime residents whose parents moved to the island.

Interviews were conducted based on a set of island-appropriate sociolinguistic interview modules; subjects were selected using a modified social network procedure (Milroy 1987). Some of the interviews also were conducted by pairs of interviewers in a home visit format. (For example, the husband and wife team of Walt and Marge Wolfram might make an after-dinner visit to a home for an interview, thus fitting into a fairly natural and recognized type of social occasion). The paired interviewer technique, not traditionally used in sociolinguistic interviewing, proved to be an

especially effective procedure for eliciting natural language. Both individual and limited group (two to three islanders) interviews were conducted.

There are several major sociolinguistic issues that become immediately apparent in a situation like the one in Ocracoke. First, there is the issue of dialect affinity. Given the surrounding dialects, the longstanding history of relative isolation, and the various migrations affecting the island, where does the Ocracoke dialect fit in? Another issue involves sociolinguistic description. What are the socially diagnostic variables in island speech and the relevant social interactional, social demographic, and socio-psychological factors that correlate with language variation? Finally, there is the issue of language change. In what direction is the variety changing, who is leading the change, and why?

As an essential addendum to our sociolinguistic study, we include a brief discussion of a collaborative research model in which sociolinguists return to the community information and linguistic artifacts that preserve the island's rich linguistic heritage. This phase of our study, often ignored by sociolinguists who conduct community-based studies, is considered as an essential complement to our sociolinguistic objectives.

THE AFFINITY ISSUE

The constellation of structures that defines the traditional Ocracoke dialect, or ***brogue***, as it is sometimes referred to by islanders, certainly sets this island apart from mainland Southern varieties. The Ocracoke brogue combines a distinctive set of dialect features that makes it appear, at various points, related to highland varieties such as Appalachian English, mainland Southern dialects, and Northern varieties. At the same time, it manifests a few unique characteristics that reveal some relics of its historical roots and migratory past.

The earliest Euro-American settlers on Ocracoke were English ship pilots who arrived in 1715 to inhabit land claimed by the English throne. Various land ownership acts in the mid-1700s apparently brought in upperclass English settlers from Southeast England, as well as settlers who migrated from their original settlement sites in the Maryland and Virginia colonies. Several island families trace their lineage to these early settlers of English origin, though one of Ocracoke's oldest and largest families, the O'Neals (the current generation had 11 sons), claims Irish ancestry. In 1850, there were as many as 104 African Americans on the island, according to Alton Ballance, local historian and author of *Ocracokers* (1989). Today there remains on Ocracoke one African American family who are the descendants of freed slaves who moved to the island after the Civil War. What must be stressed, in contrast to popular stereotypes of island speech, is the fact that no residents speak or ever spoke Elizabethan English, though phonological, grammatical and lexical relics are still attested in Ocracoke (e.g. the nucleus for [ay] diphthong attested in EModE

[ʌ]; vestigial [h] retention in [hit] 'it'; a-prefixing; ***weren't*** generalization, as in *She **weren't** there*; and ***mammick*** 'harass').

The language contact situation has been greatly influenced by the island's location. Ocracoke saw heavy ship traffic for many decades, whether for lawful trade, pirating, or military purposes. The commercial ship trade, excluding fishing, also took natives, especially men, to such Northern ports as Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware--not Wilmington, North Carolina. In fact, an estimated 75 percent of the older generation, usually men, spent some time in these Northern sea ports. These men would return to Ocracoke after periods ranging from a year to decades. Even today, islanders often make shopping, business and social trips up the coast to Norfolk, VA, and Wilmington, DE. Such migration and travel patterns must not be obscured as we unravel the island's socio-historical linguistic mystery.

Wars also affected the socio-historical context of the island. Ocracoke was strategically important in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War, when it was occupied by Union soldiers. In addition, a naval base was established on the island in World War II.

Of course, the population demographics have changed significantly since the island became a popular tourist spot, producing somewhat of a classic love-hate relationship between ***dingbatters***, the island name for outsiders, and ***Ocockers***, the island term for native residents. At present, it is estimated that about half of the 600 year-round island residents are ancestral Ocockers. During the height of the tourist season, the population may swell to 4,000, with summer homes, island motels, and National Park Service campgrounds housing overnight dingbatters.

Notwithstanding the sociolinguistic variability that exists in Ocracoke, an initial question is the dialect affinity of the traditional structures associated with this variety. In Tables 1 and 2, we present a broad-based comparison of traditional island dialect features with several other major varieties. It is important to understand that we use as our basis for comparison the more basilectal version of the Ocracoke dialect. The major dialects compared are Highland Southern dialects, such as those found in Appalachia and the Ozarks, non-highland Southern dialects such as those found in the North Carolina piedmont, and a default non-Southern dialect category, which includes midland and northern varieties of American English.

STRUCTURE	Ocracoke	Highland South	South	Non-South
[ay] raising, backing e.g. [tʌ^{I}d] 'tide'	x			
aw raising, fronting e.g. [sE^{U}θ] 'south'	x			
[h] retention in 'it', 'ain't' e.g. [hIt] 'it'	(x)	x		
[æ] lowering prec. *r* e.g. [ɛ̈ar] 'there'	x	x		
intrusive [t] e.g. [wʌnst] 'once'	x	x		
[ayr]/[awr] reduction e.g. [tar] 'tire'	x	x	(x)	
stressed interdental fric. del e.g. [ær] 'there'	x	x	(x)	
expanded unstressed syll del e.g. [tetrz] 'taters'	x	x	(x)	
intrusive *r*, unstr. final [o] e.g. [fƐlr] 'feller'	x	x	(x)	
[šr] fronting e.g. [srImp] 'shrimp'	x		(x)	
Cr [+rnd] reduction e.g. [θo] 'throw'	x	x	x	
unstressed initial [w] del [yʌŋənz] 'young unz'	x	x	x	
[I]/[E] prec. [+nas] merger e.g. [pIn] 'pin'/'pen'	x	x	x	
front lax vowel gliding e.g. [fI's]	x	x	x	
[ay] ungliding e.g. [tam] 'time'	(x)		x	
back vowel fronting [bo<^{U}t] 'boat'	(x)		x	
[a]/[ɔ] merger e.g. [kat] 'cot'/'caught'				x
postvocalic *r* loss [ka] 'car'		x		(x)

Table 1. A Comparative Overview of Selected Phonological Structures

STRUCTURE	Ocracoke	Highland South	South	Non-South
Were/n't Generalization e.g. She *weren't* here	x			
to stative locative e.g. She's *to* the store	x			
a-prefixing e.g. He was *a-fishin'*	x	x	(x)	
measure N plural absence e.g. twenty mile_	x	x	(x)	
collective NP concord e.g. *People gets* upset	x	x	(x)	
have concord e.g. My nerves *has* been bad	x	x	(x)	
completive *done* e.g. She *done* messed up	x	x	x	
double modals e.g. He *might could* come	(x)	(x)	x	
embedded rel. subject del. e.g. The man __ come down was nice	x	x	x	
irregular verb (1) generalized past/part. e.g. She *had came* here	x	x	x	x
(2) generalized part./past e.g. She *done* it	x	x	x	x
(3) bare root as past e.g. She *give* him a dog	x	x	x	(x)
(4) regularization e.g. She *knowed* him		x	(x)	
(5) different irregular e.g. He *retch* up the roof		x		
2nd plural *y'all* e.g. *Y'all* come again	x	(x)	x	
intensifying *right* e.g. He's *right* silly	x	x	x	
positive *anymore* e.g. We watch T.V. *anymore*	x	x		x
was/is generalization e.g. We *was* there	(x)	x	x	x
Preverb indef. Neg. concord e.g. *Nobody didn't* go	x	x	x	x

Table 2. A Comparative Overview of Selected Grammatical Structures

Tables 1 and 2 reveal a rather unique constellation of structures for Ocracoke, including a couple of structures that set apart the Outer Banks dialect from all surrounding dialects. For example, Ocracoke, as a representative of an Outer Banks variety, displays some vowel features (e.g. [ay] raising in [tʌ^{I}d] 'tide' and [aw] raising and fronting in [sEuθ] 'south') that are not shared by inland Southern varieties, although some of these features are present to a degree in some Southern coastal varieties, including the Cartaret County area of North Carolina. Grammatical features that occur with high frequency in Ocracoke speech and to a lesser degree in mainland coastal North Carolina include ***were/n't*** generalization (e.g., *I **weren't** there*) and the use of ***to*** as static locative (e.g., *She's **to** the store*); some lexical items unique to Ocracoke or the North Carolina Outer Banks are ***meehonkey***, a term used in the Ocracoke version of hide-and-seek, and ***mammick*** 'harass'. While sharing some features with contiguous coastal southern varieties, the Ocracoke brogue has many features in common with isolated highland varieties such as Appalachian English and Ozark English (Wolfram and Christian 1976; Christian, Wolfram, and Dube 1988), such as *a*-prefixing (e.g., *Rex went a-fishin'*), absence of -Z plural with nouns of weights and measures (e.g. *four mile*), singular verb concord with collective noun phrases (e.g., *People is nice*) and conjoined noun phrases (e.g., *Candy and Melinda usually takes them*), [æ] lowering (e.g. [ɛar] 'there', *ire* syllable reduction before *r* [tar] 'tire', and schwa raising (e.g. [Ekstri] 'extra') and intrusive *r* in unstressed final syllables (e.g. [skitr] 'mosquito').

In any authentic comparison of Ocracoke speech with other varieties, such as Southern Highland varieties, we must keep in mind that many of the structures are inherently variable. Compare, for example, the differences in the incidence of nonstandard subject-verb concord for three different classes of noun phrases as found in Ocracoke, Appalachian English, and Ozark English, namely, a conjoined plural (e.g. *She and I does this*), a collective noun phrase (e.g. *People likes them*), and a pronoun (e.g. *They likes them*). Figures for Ozark and Appalachian English (from Christian, Wolfram, and Dube (1988: 116-117)) are given for verbs other than ***be***, ***have***, and ***don't***, which operate somewhat independently in their effect on nonstandard concord. The preliminary figures for Ocracoke are based on only six subjects (Hazen 1993) and include several tokens of ***have***, but they are nonetheless sufficiently comparable to the other two varieties to suggest certain dialectal affinities with respect to subject-verb concord patterns.

NP TYPE	Ozark	Appalachian	Ocracoke
Conjoined NP	33.3%	52.9%	12.5%
Collective NP	26.9%	25.9%	28.9%
Pronoun	0.1%	0.2%	2.6%

Table 3. Nonstandard Concord for Three Noun Phrase Types in Highland Southern and Ocracoke English

Although the figures for Ocracoke are still preliminary, the increased incidence of nonstandard concord for collective and conjoined noun phrases and the low incidence of nonstandard concord with pronouns is a pattern shared across the varieties. Of course, it is necessary to compare these figures with those from other varieties as well to get an authentic picture of how the variable dimensions of structural affinity position Ocracoke within the full complement of American English varieties.

It is important to note that classic Southern features such as *ay* ungliding and postvocalic *r*-lessness are not typically found among ancestral islanders in Ocracoke, although some selective Southern features occur, such as plural *y'all* and some lax vowel gliding, as in [fɪ'š] 'fish'. By the same token, traditionally non-Southern structures such as positive *anymore* (e.g., *Anything that hits me puts a mark on me anymore*) are found in Ocracoke. The overall profile of Ocracoke speech that emerges from such a comparison certainly highlights the unique constellation of structures that comprises this Outer Banks variety.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPLEXITY

Although our detailed analysis of phonology and morphosyntax is in the incipient stages, we must realistically admit that the complexities involved in describing even the most marked and traditional of Ocracoke speech structures, the raising (or more technically correct, raising, backing, and slight rounding) of the nucleus vowel in the diphthong *ay* of [hʌˈ tʌˈd] 'high tide' presents a significant linguistic and sociolinguistic challenge. The limited analysis we have so far undertaken reveals that the incidence of *ay* raising is quite variable, being affected by important external factors such as social network, style, gender, and even perhaps an "*island quaintness quotient.*" As we shall see, its systematic variability also appears to be affected by internal linguistic factors such as the following phonological environment. At the same time, however, there are some linguistic contexts in which *ay* is categorically NOT found. For example, in the sequence [ayr] of words like *fire* and *tire*, the production is categorically [ar], as in [tar] for *tire*. This restriction suggests a rather straightforward qualitative phonological condition on the operation of a regular phonological rule. Other cases are not so simple. For example, a single speaker was recorded as producing the *ay* in the word *Carolina* in all cases with traditional Southern ungliding (e.g. [kær lan]), although he does not typically use Southern ungliding to any extent elsewhere. This is an interesting lexicalized pronunciation of the term for the state whose mainland region is often viewed by islanders as far more distant symbolically than the 20 miles of water that separate it from Ocracoke.

The distribution of a selection of diagnostic dialect structures for three ancestral islanders in Tables 4 and 5 shows the complexity of the sociolinguistic situation in Ocracoke. In particular, it reveals how traditional objective socio-economic and educational indices do not necessarily correlate directly with the incidence of vernacular and diagnostic Ocracoke English features. The speakers included in this comparison include a 49 year old male ancestral islander and two women aged 82 and 29. The 49 year old male, both a prominent community leader

and a college graduate, is regarded as a "classic" brogue speaker. Both the 82 year old and the 29 year old women are high school graduates. Structures represented in the speech sample (variably or categorically) are indicated by an x; structures found to a limited variable extent are enclosed with parentheses.

PHONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE	49 year old male	82 year old female	29 year old female
[ay] raising, backing e.g. [tʌ^{I}d] 'tide'	x		(x)
aw raising, fronting e.g. [sEUθ] 'south'	x		(x)
[æ] lowering prec. *r* e.g. [ɛ̈ar] 'there'	x		x
[ayr]/[awr] reduction e.g. [tar] 'tire'	x		x
intrusive *r*, unstr. final [o] e.g. [fElr] 'feller'	x		
unstressed initial [w] del [yʌŋənz] 'young unz'	x		
front lax vowel gliding e.g. [fI's]	x	(x)	x
back vowel fronting [bo<^{U}t] 'boat'	x		x
postvocalic *r* loss [ka] 'car'		(x)	

Table 4. Comparison of Selected Phonological Structures for Three Ancestral Islanders in Ocracoke

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE	49 year old male	82 year old female	29 year old female
Were/n't Generalization e.g. She ***weren't*** here	x	(x)	x
to stative locative e.g. She's ***to*** the store	x	x	x
a-prefixing e.g. He was ***a-fishin'***	x		
measure N plural absence e.g. twenty mile_	x		x
collective NP nonstandard concord e.g. ***People gets*** upset	x	(x)	x
double modals e.g. He ***might could*** come	x		x
irregular verb (1) generalized past/part. e.g. She ***had came*** here (2) generalized part./past e.g. She ***done*** it (3) bare root as past e.g. She ***give*** him a dog (4) regularization e.g. She ***knowed*** him (5) different irregular e.g. He ***retch*** up the roof	x x x	x x	x x x
2nd plural ***y'all*** e.g. ***Y'all*** come again	x	x	x
intensifying ***right*** e.g. He's ***right*** silly	x	(x)	x
was/is generalization e.g. We ***was*** there	x		x
postverbal multiple negation e.g. They ***didn't*** do ***nothing***	x		x
Preverb indef. Neg. concord e.g. ***Nobody didn't*** go	x		

Table 5. Comparison of Selected Grammatical Structures for Three Ancestral Islanders in Ocracoke

Tables 4 and 5 indicate that the distribution of dialect structures does not fit neatly into a simple generational, educational, or gender-related pattern. The 82 year-old female high school graduate whose heritage goes back to one of the original island families hardly uses any of the traditional dialect features, while the 49 year old male college graduate uses a full set of these structures. At the same time, the 29 year old female high school graduate maintains a core of the traditional structures, but not to the extent of the 49 year old male.

The comparison of speakers in Tables 4 and 5 also shows that it is wrong to assume that gender correlates caterorically with the use of the classic brogue, although there certainly is a critical gender dimension that intersects with social network and age. Furthermore, age does not show a simple linear regression in its correlation with vernacular dialect structures. In fact, there is evidence of a curvilinear relationship with age when the intersecting effect of social network is considered. Middle-aged men who are part of the "poker game network," a relatively exclusive male islander group that meets several times a week and shows relatively dense, multiplex networks, may actually show a higher incidence of some traditional island features than some of their older cohorts.

In the following sections, we discuss briefly two of the diagnostic structures under investigation in Ocracoke, illustrating the sociolinguistic and linguistic challenge involved in providing an authentic description of this variety.

WERE/N'T GENERALIZATION

The case of past tense concord for finite *be* (Estes forthcoming) illustrates the type of sociolinguistic challenge we face in describing the speech of an island such as Ocracoke. The use of ***were*** regularization patterns, particularly with the negative ***weren't***, is quite well attested historically and currently in vernacular speech in England (Trudgill 1990; Cheshire 1982). However, even the most limited descriptive dimensions of the ***were*** regularization alternative have apparently been ignored for American English varieties, although ***were/n't*** regularization, as well as the ***was*** regularization more commonly noted in U.S. varieties, does occur in relic areas such as Ocracoke. In fact, a single speaker may regularize both ***was*** and ***were***, as in sentence (1):

(1) Then one time I ***were*** looking through the dictionary and there ***was*** both words, "shipwreck" and "shipwrack."
(80 year old male, native of Ocracoke)

Were/n't regularization does not appear to be receding in Ocracoke; it has been observed in the speech of young islanders, even in formal elicitation frames, as the exchange given in (2) illustrates:

(2) FW: If I said, "Was that you I saw on the point yesterday and you said, 'No, it _____
SUBJ 1: ***Weren't.***
SUBJ 2: ***Wasn't.*** ***Weren't*** is what I would more use. ***Weren't.*** It ***weren't*** me, it ***wasn't*** me, whatever, whatever I say at the time.
SUBJ 1: I think I'd probably end up saying it ***weren't*** me.
(16, 18 year old males)

Since both ***was*** and ***were*** regularization are variable phenomena, we are investigating the internal linguistic constraints on this pattern, as well as its role as a socially diagnostic linguistic variable. A preliminary analysis of ***was/n't*** and ***were/n't*** generalization in Ocracoke speech was conducted based on conversational interviews with two native islanders, a 70 year old female and an 80 year old male. The internal factor groups examined were subject person and number; noun phrase status, including the type of noun phrase (e.g., *The duck **were** there; I **were** there*); regular pronoun versus existential pronoun (e.g., *They **were** down by the docks; They **were** ducks*); and positive and negative polarity (e.g., *She **weren't** here; She **were** here*). Internal factor groups for future study include tag versus non-tag structure (e.g., *The duck **was** there, **weren't** it?*), and the type of clause in which ***was/n't*** or ***were/n't*** occurs (e.g., matrix versus embedded clause: *Rex **weren't** the fisherman; The man who **weren't** there **was** fishing*). External factor groups under examination, though not here tabulated, include age, gender, and status in the island community. The results of a limited preliminary analysis are summarized in Table 6.

POSITIVE

Sg. Subj.	No.	Pct. *were*	Pl. Subj.	No.	Pct. *were*
I was	51		we was	0	
I were	3	5.6%	we were	8	100%
you (sg) was	0		you (pl) was	0	
you (sg) were	2	100%	you (pl) were	0	--
NP			**NP**		
the duck was	35		the ducks was	2	
the duck were	1	2.8%	the ducks were	9	81.8%
3rd sg pro			**3rd pl pro**		
he was	83		they was	2	
he were	2	2.4%	they were	18	90.0%
3rd sg ext			**3rd pl ext**		
there was a duck	8		there was ducks	6	
there were a duck	1	11.1%	there were ducks	4	40.0%

Total *was* = 187
Total *were* = 48 % *were* = 20.4 %

NEGATIVE

Sg. Subj.	No.	Pct. *were*	Pl. Subj.	No.	Pct. *were*
I wasn't	1		we wasn't	0	
I weren't	3	75.0%	we weren't	1	100%
you (sg) wasn't	0		you (pl) wasn't	0	
you (sg) weren't	1	100%	you (pl) weren't	0	--
NP			**NP**		
the duck wasn't	0		the ducks wasn't	0	
the duck weren't	1	100%	the ducks weren't	0	--
3rd sg pro			**3rd pl pro**		
he wasn't	7		they wasn't	0	
he weren't	9	56.3%	they weren't	2	100%
3rd sg ext			**3rd pl ext**		
there wasn't a duck	0		there wasn't ducks	0	
there weren't a duck	1	100%	there weren't ducks	0	--

Total *wasn't* = 8
Total *weren't* = 18 % *weren't* = 69.2 %

Table 6. *Were/n't* Regularization Patterns: Preliminary Data from Two Ancestral Islanders

Although the results must be viewed with caution, some interesting hypotheses arise from this examination. For example, the above figures indicate that first and third person singular ***weren't*** is more common than positive ***were***, especially with non-existential pronoun subjects. Note also that, while third person plural past tense positive ***be*** is sometimes regularized to ***was*** (e.g., *The men was; They was*), third plural negative ***be*** is never regularized to ***wasn't***. Such findings suggest that Ocracoke speakers tend to generalize past tense ***be*** to ***was*** in the positive paradigm and to ***weren't*** in the negative, although further quantitative analysis is necessary to strengthen this tentative conclusion. Certainly, though, our limited study reveals that the linguistic and sociolinguistic complexity of ***weren't*** distribution extends far beyond the simplistic observation that islanders sometimes use ***weren't*** for ***wasn't***.

Our investigation of ***weren't*** has so far been limited to internal constraints, but it is necessary to consider external constraints as well in our investigation of the Ocracoke dialect. As mentioned previously, simplistic assumptions about age, change, and gender are simply not warranted. For example, the 82 year old female included in our comparison in Tables 4 and 5 used ***were/n't*** generalization only once during an hour long interview (and not at all in several hours of non-recorded converstation with fieldworkers), although it is a relatively widespread Ocracoke dialect structure. Although this speaker attributed her lack of traditional dialect features (a subject which arose naturally during the course of the conversation) to the fact that, when she was growing up, her father owned a general store frequented by customers from all over the country, her acrolectal speech patterns are perhaps more accurately explained by her several years of high school education on the North Carolina mainland (at the time of her schooling, high school education for islanders was only available on the mainland), as well as the reputation of her family as prestigious, well-travelled members of the island community.

THE CASE OF *AY* RAISING

Our investigation of ***ay*** raising illustrates the complexity of the intersection of external constraints with internal linguistic constraints in Ocracoke speech. Preliminary tabulations conducted by Craig (forthcoming) based on conversational interviews with two male islanders and one female islander (ranging in age from 39 to 60) suggest that ***ay*** raising may be influenced by such features of the following segment as voicing and position within the sonorancy hierarchy as outlined by Selkirk (1982). Of special interest is the fact that ***ay*** raising in Ocracoke speech occurs with greater frequency before voiced segments than voiceless. This finding seemingly runs counter to the pattern we find in Standard American English and many vernacular varieties, where [ay] is often slightly raised before voiceless segments (e.g. write → [rəʲt], ride → [raʲd]) but not before voiced sounds. The results of our ***ay*** raising analysis are summarized in Table 7; in the table ## = word-final position (e.g. ***high***), V = vowel (e.g. ***buying***), Liq = liquid (e.g. ***file***), Nas = nasal (e.g. ***time***), Vd Fr = voiced fricative (e.g. ***five***), Vl Fr = voiceless fricative (e.g. ***nice***), Vd st = voiced stop (e.g. ***tide***), and Vl St = voiceless stop (e.g. ***bike***). The number raised out of the potential cases of ***ay*** raising and percentage of raising is given in each environment for the three speakers.

Speaker	##	V	Liq	Nas	Vd Fr	Vl Fr	Vd St	Vl St
49 year old male	2/ 2	3/ 5	5/ 12	28/ 36	18/ 19	1/ 5	17/ 29	38/ 66
	100	60.0	41.6	77.7	94.7	20.0	58.6	57.6
47 year old female	0/ 2	4/ 7	9/ 17	12/ 18	13/ 15	7/ 12	19/ 21	27/ 48
	0.0	57.1	52.9	66.6	86.6	58.3	90.4	56.3
39 year old male	17/ 21	7/ 7	6/ 9	12/ 17	4/ 8	2/ 6	7/ 7	30/ 44
	81.0	100	66.7	70.6	50.0	33.3	100	68.2

Totals	##	V	Liq	Nas	Vd Fr	Vl Fr	Vd St	Vl St
N/ Total	19/ 25	14/ 19	20/ 38	52/ 71	35/ 42	10/ 23	43/ 57	95/ 158
%	76.0	73.7	52.6	73.2	83.3	43.5	75.4	60.1

Table 7. Potential Internal Constraints on Variability in *ay* Raising

An external constraint that appears greatly to influence the incidence of *ay* raising, as well as select other features of the Ocracoke dialect, such as the raising and fronting of [aw] in words such as ***south***, is speakers' awareness of these features as markers of stereotypical island speech. In fact, there exists a set of "soap box" phrases that include a concentration of stereotypical island dialect features such as *ay* raising. Example (3), elicited from a 39 year old male in reference to meeting Walt Wolfram at the poker game, illustrates:

(3) Came out there and said, "I'm studying speech." I said, well, it's high[1] tide[1] on the sound[2] side[1], last night[1] the water fire, tonight[1] the moon shine[1], no fish[3], no fish[3]. (39 year old male, fisherman)

[1][ay] raising, backing
[2][aw] raising, fronting
[3]front lax vowel gliding ([I] → [Iˑ])

These types of caricatures of stereotypical island speech are used frequently by both islanders and outsiders. Thus, we find such fairly typical representations of island speech as example (4), an excerpt from a newspaper column written by an outsider:

(4) On Hatteras and Ocracoke and in the fishing village of Wanchese, you will occasionally hear an Outer Banks accent. It sounds something like this: "What toime is it hoigh toide on the sound soide?"
(Ford Reid, "Outer Banks resists homogenization of the American voice," *The Coast*, May 23, 1993)

While both islanders and non-islanders are aware of such highly marked features, islanders may readily manipulate their incidence of dialect features in response to an array of interactional variables. For example, ***ay*** raising appears to be quite sensitive to stylistic variation. The 39 year old male included in the tabulation in Table 7 was interviewed in a relatively natural context, that is, while working outside on his crab pots, by a fieldworker with whom he had become good friends in the course of the research visit. During the interview, a couple of the subject's brothers arrived and engaged in an animated conversation about a hole in a duck pen. At this point, the fieldworker became what is called an auditor, according to Bell's (1984) model of audience design.. Correspondingly, a marked shift toward a more basilectal version of the ***brogue*** was noted in the subject's speech. An analysis of ***ay*** raising in this subject's speech during his conversation with his brothers and alone with the fieldworker reveals the stylistic shift. Figures for the incidence of ***ay*** raising (excluding the word *I* as a lexical exception) for the conversation with the brothers and with the fieldworker alone are given in Table 8.

	##	V	Liq	Nas	Vd Fr	Vl Fr	Vd St	Vl St
Bro Conv.	11/12	6/6	3/3	2/3	2/3	–	7/7	18/20
	91.7	100	100	66.7	66.7		100	90.0
FW Conv.	6/9	1/1	3/6	10/14	2/5	2/6	–	12/24
	66.7	100	50.0	71.4	40.0	33.3		50.0

	No Raised/Tot	% Raised
Raising with Brothers	49/54	90.7
Raising with Fieldworker Alone	36/65	55.4

Table 8. Audience-Related Stylistic Differentiation in *ay* Raising

While there is a dramatic increase in the use of *ay* raising in the two interactions, a tabulation of [æ] lowering before *r* (e.g. *there, wear*) for the same passages reveals no significant stylistic difference (Craig forthcoming). Such manipulation of variables shows that the highly marked social nature of diagnostic variables such as this one make the principled consideration of situational and interactional factors quite critical for any realistic study of Ocracoke English. Indeed, the array of linguistic, situational, interactional, and socio-psychological factors in Ocracoke is as complex as any sociolinguistic study we have ever undertaken.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE OF LINGUISTIC GRATUITY IN OCRACOKE

Sociolinguists have been conducting community-based studies for a number of years now, but the majority of studies have been unidirectional in terms of linguistic profit and education. There are, however, occasions in the history of dialect study where linguists have taken social action on behalf of the communities who have provided them data. According to Labov (1982), there are two primary principles that may motivate linguists to take social action, namely, the *principle of error correction* and the *principle of debt incurred*. The former principle refers to the obligation of researchers to correct widespread misconceptions when their data invalidates them, and the latter refers to investigators' obligation to use the knowledge gained from their studies for the benefit of the community when the community has need for it (Labov 1982:172-173). For the most part, however, the social role assumed by the linguist in the community under study has been that of *reactive advocacy*, where the linguist responds to a social concern that arises within the community.

We would like to suggest that there is another level of social commitment that investigators should adopt toward the language communities who have provided them data, a level that is more positive and proactive in that it actively pursues ways in which linguistic favors can be returned to the community. The *principle of linguistic gratuity* maintains that investigators who have obtained linguistic data from members of a speech community should actively pursue positive ways in which they can return linguistic favors to the community (Wolfram forthcoming).

Several of the follow-up activities involved in our Ocracoke research project aim to apply the principle of linguistic gratuity. First of all, we are writing a popular account of the language history of Ocracoke that is intended to be useful to Ocracoke residents, including the school system. In part, this history is motivated by the *principle of error correction* since there is a widely publicized stereotype that Ocracoke speech is simply a retention of Elizabethan English. While relic forms are certainly found in Ocracoke, the general stereotype needs to be challenged on the basis of carefully documented evidence. The language history and description of Ocracoke speech, however, is also motivated by the *linguistic gratuity principle.* Islanders are proud of their historical heritage and are quite knowledgeable about their genealogies, and we hope to build on this indigenous value by working with the community to describe the role of language traditions in the development of the Ocracoke community. For example, Ocracokers are conscious of some unique island or Outer Banks lexical items and some of these items have, in fact, become symbolic tokens of island quaintness. Thus, a simple, relatively superficial vocabulary-based exercise such as that provided in the Appendix is rooted in islander's pride in their unique historical lexical heritage.

We are also compiling an archival tape of representative speech samples from our interviews to share with the Ocracoke Historical Preservation Society so that language will be preserved along with other physical and cultural artifacts. Language is, in many ways, the most sacred of all cultural traditions and is the rightful property of its users. We hope to be sensitive to this unique role of language, and to preserve this unique artifact that has been shared with us by archiving for present and future generations of Ocracokers the current state of Ocracoke English and the apparent time changes that are represented in the current population of the island.

And, with the cooperation of the educational system, we plan to produce a modified Language Awareness Program Project which is appropriate for Ocracoke. Thus, school children would be exposed to a unit on language as they explore the socio-historical circumstances that have molded the development and maintenance of Ocracoke language and culture in particular and the coastal culture of North Carolina in general, along with the general development of dialects in the United States (Wolfram 1992). In the best of all scenarios, we hope to involve students not simply as passive observers of language variation but as student ethnographers in the active collection and description of Ocracoke speech.

AN OCRACOKE IQ TEST
or
HOW TO TELL A DINGBATTER FROM AN OCOCKER*

1. *dingbatter*
   a. baseball player in a small boat
   b. a husband
   c. a wife
   d. an outsider

2. *winard*
   a. a poker-playing wino
   b. moving into the wind
   c. a person who wins a game
   d. a piece of equipment used in crabbing

3. *meehonky*
   a. a call used in hide and seek
   b. a call made to attract ducks
   c. the call of an angry person
   d. an island marsh plant

4. *quamish*
   a. an upset stomach
   b. a fearful feeling
   c. a bad headache
   d. an excited feeling

5. *pizzer*
   a. a small boat
   b. a deck
   c. a porch
   d. a small Italian pie with cheese

6. *mammick* (also spelled *mommuck*)
   a. to imitate someone
   b. to bother someone
   c. to make fun of someone
   d. to become close friends with someone

7. She's *to* the restaurant.
   a. She ate at the restaurant twice.
   b. She's been to the restaurant.
   c. She's at the restaurant.
   d. She's going to the restaurant.

8. *fladget*
   a. gas in the alimentary canal
   b. an island men's game
   c. a small island bird
   d. a small piece of something

9. *puck*
   a. a small disk used in island hockey games
   b. a sweetheart
   c. a kiss on the cheek
   d. a mischievous person

10. *Ococker*
   a. a derogatory term for an Ocracoker
   b. a outsider's mispronunciation of the term Ocracocker
   c. an island term for a native Ocracoker
   d. an island term for bluefish

11. *token of death*
   a. a coin needed for admission to Hades
   b. a sickness leading to death
   c. a fatal epidemic
   d. an unusual event that forecasts a death

12. *louard*
   a. lowering an anchor
   b. an exaggerated exclamation, as in "louard have mercy"
   c. moving away from the wind
   d. a fatty substance

13. *Russian rat*
   a. a unique island rodent
   b. an island gossip
   c. a vodka-drinking narc
   d. a mink

14. *Hatterasser*
   a. a storm that blows in from Hatteras
   b. a ferry ride from Ocracoke to Hatteras
   c. a person from Hatteras
   d. a fishing trip in Hatteras Inlet

15. *skiff*
   a. a large boat
   b. a small boat
   c. a strong wind
   d. a light wind

OCRACOKE IQ SCORE

0-4	=	a complete dingbatter
5-8	=	an educable dingbatter
9-12	=	an average Ococker
13-15	=	an island genius

*Thanks to James Barrie Gaskill of Ocracoke for his input on this test.

Answers:

1.	d	9.	b
2.	b	10.	c
3.	a	11.	d
4.	a	12.	c
5.	c	13.	a
6.	b	14.	c
7.	c	15.	b
8.	d		

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